

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace page 3 of the Specification with the following page of text:

parallel port. The machine vision software would check whether the required security code is present before executing a protected algorithm;

- Dedicated software security in which, for example, protected software may be registered on a specific computer that is associated with a unique identifier on the computer, such as a hard disk serial number or an Ethernet address. Any attempt to copy the protected software to another computer would fail if that computer does not have the same unique identifier; and

- Floating licenses in which, for example, licenses are granted from a central computer on a network. Other computers on the network must request and be granted a license in order to run the protected software. When the computers are finished, they typically release the license so that other computers can use the license. A fixed number of licenses are issued, so if more than that number of computers try to request a license, the last computers to request a license must wait until a license is freed by a computer.

These security methods present numerous problems that hinder the use of machine vision. The hardware and dedicated security methods are awkward to manage, and do not readily permit sharing of licenses among multiple computers. Floating licenses are subject to problems if the license server or any computer with a license crashes or goes off the network, or if the network itself ceases operation. Also, floating licenses do not readily handle inconsistent loads, i.e., periods of relative inactivity followed by periods when there are more requests for licenses than there are licenses. To accommodate these inconsistent loads, users

Please replace page 4 of the Specification with the following page of text:

must purchase additional licenses which are unused for significant portions of time, or queue up license requests.

Additionally, the security methods make it difficult for users of machine vision software to efficiently maintain the latest version of software because the user must explicitly install the software on each computer that needs to run the latest version of software. This is often difficult once a computer has been installed at a manufacturing facility. It may also be difficult to install bug fixes, patches and service releases which fix problems with older versions of the software. Customers must also track which versions of software and patches they have installed on each computer. In addition, computers using hardware or dedicated software security may need to update their licenses in the field if the new software requires additional license permission in order to run.

What is needed is an efficient and effective way to permit users to pay for only machine vision software that they need, when they need it, without the limitations of licensing schemes. What is also needed is an effective way for customers to have access to the latest versions of machine vision software, without having to explicitly install it on every computer that uses it. What is further needed is a simple method for users to test machine vision software without having to purchase or license the software in order to determine whether the software meets their requirements.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention, in one aspect, provides a system and method for analyzing machine vision data via a remotely accessed computer. A first computer acquires image data and transfers it to a remotely located second computer. The first computer also specifies